
Which communication to consumers?

Mario Abis

Adjunct Professor of Psychosocial Researches on Consumers and
Public Opinion, IULM University – Milan

with the collaboration of

Luciana Castelli PhD, IULM University - Milan

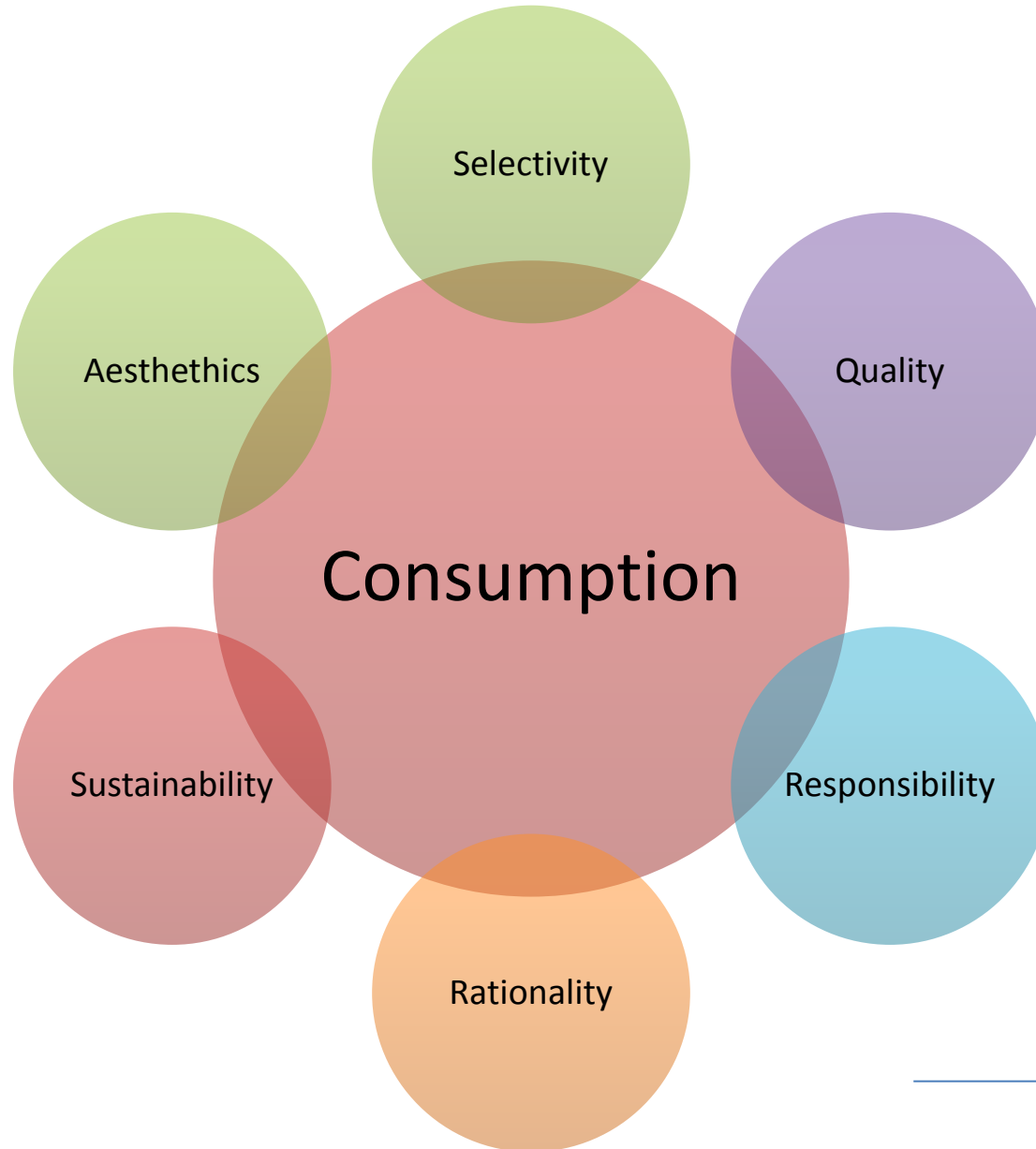
Agenda

- **New dimensions of consumption**
 - Consumer decision making and communication

- **Causes and consequences**
 - Crisis and consumer choices
 - The sustainability fever

- **How shall we communicate?**
 - Advertising and CSR
 - The role of Brand

New dimensions of consumption



-
- Consumers change their expectancies, their attitudes and their behaviour toward products.



- Consumers' decision making processes take longer than before.
- Traditional advertising is no longer effective in persuading consumers.
- Communication to consumers needs to be adapted to the new structure of consumption

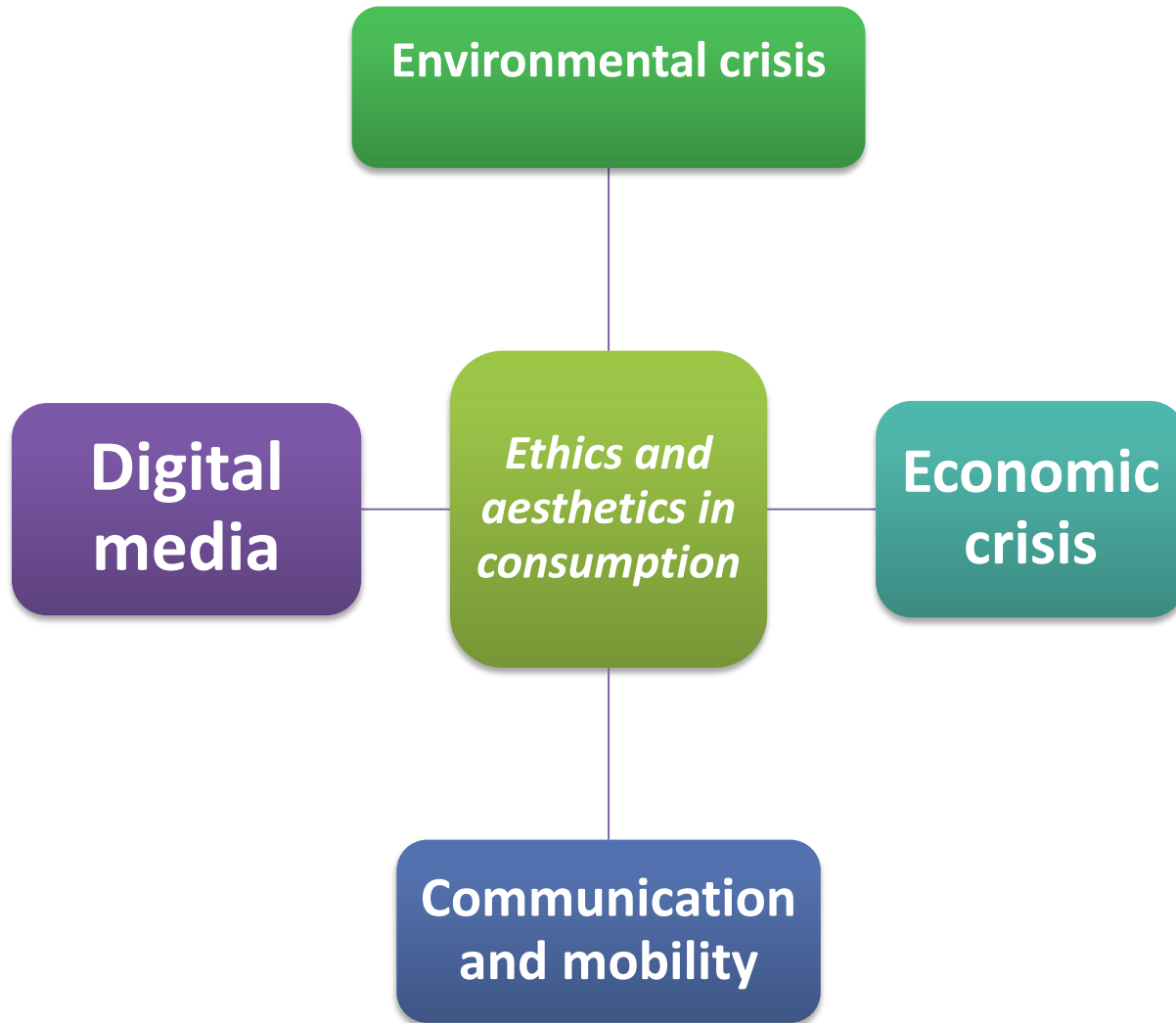
Consumer decision making and communication

- **Time-extension of consumer decision making process:**
 - individuals are more rational than compulsive
 - choice is more a reasoning than an impulse

- **Consumers need to be supported than persuaded:**
 - traditional advertising is no longer effective for consumers
 - new forms of communication might “accompany” consumers during their choices

- **Digital media confirmed their importance for individuals:**
 - Commercial relationship becomes more interactive
 - Communication must provide useful information to consumers
 - Co-creation of content: consumers co-create their own communication

Causes and consequences



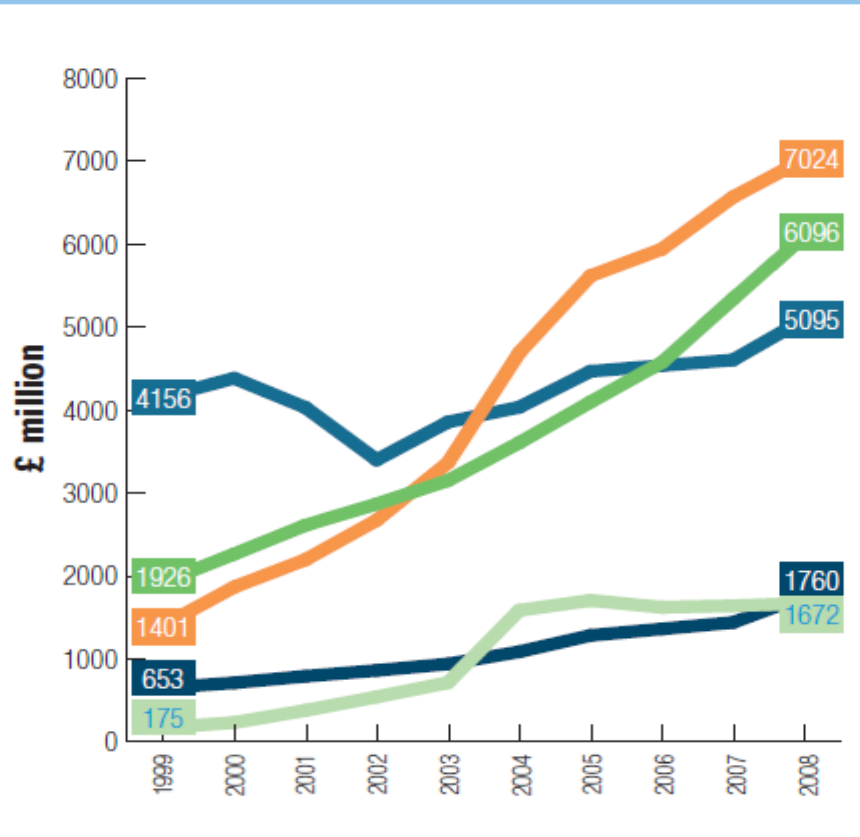
Crisis and consumer choices

- **Same products, but less in quantity:**
Voluntary simplification, less products for less waste (smaller packs, simpler products)
- **Same products, but lower in prices:**
Outlet, commercial promotions
- **Less products but worthy and value oriented:**
Fair trade, organic food, Km 0



The sustainability fever

Ethical consumerism in the UK, 1999-2008



- People are more concerned about the sustainability issue than in the recent past.
- Environmental crisis, epidemic diseases, lack of natural resources, nuclear crisis, pollution influenced the actual perception of consumers.
- Sustainability becomes a crucial driver for consumer choices.

How shall we communicate?

- **Communication to consumers** should be:

Transparent

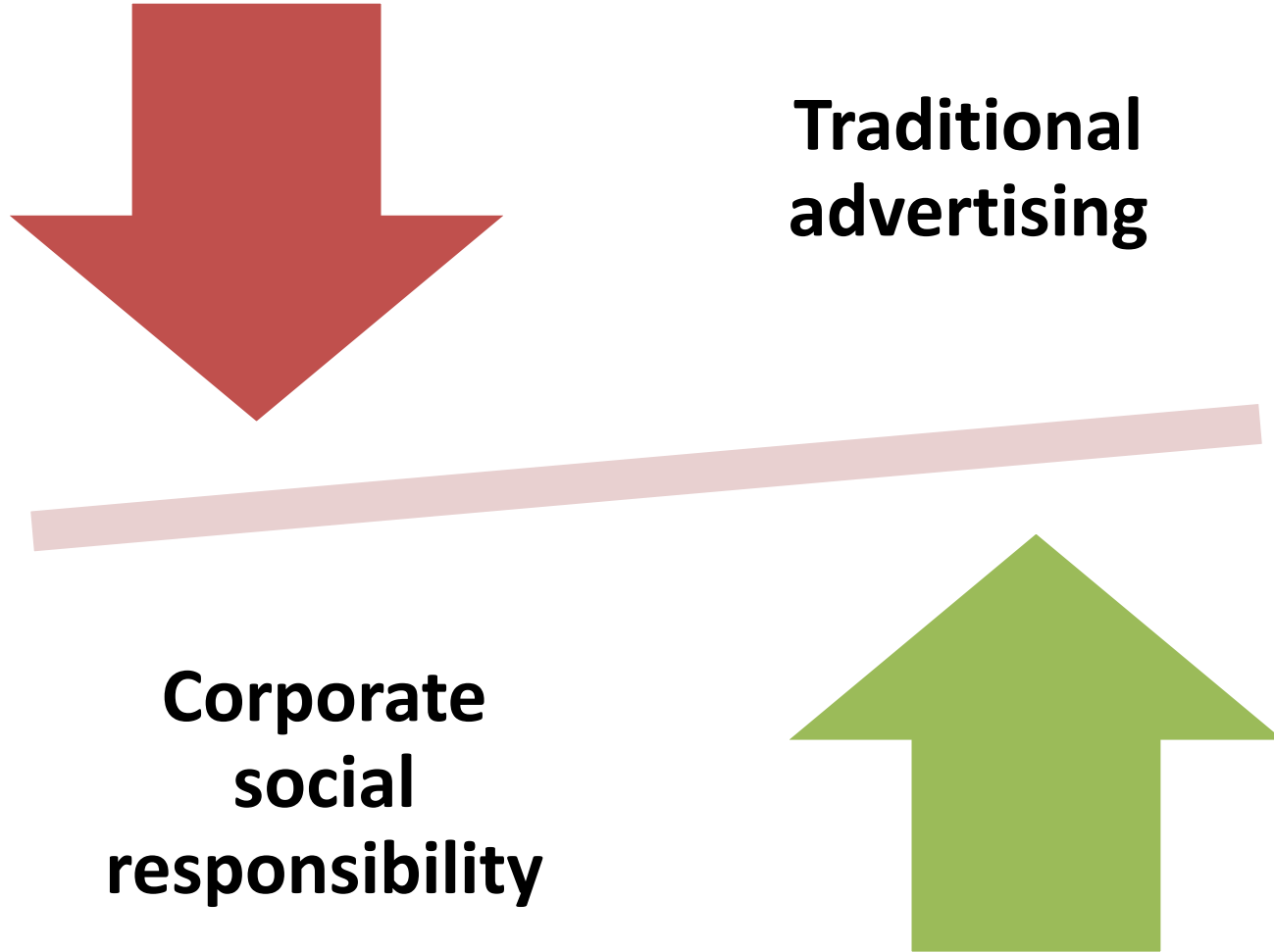
Informative

Near and warm

True and sincere

Plausible

Advertising and CSR



The role of Brand: from product to relationship

- The change is:
 - ➔ From **corporate and product image** to **corporate identity and values**
 - ➔ **Consumers need to trust in communication**, also through the symbolism of the Brand
 - ➔ Brand represents the **mean for the relationship between corporate and consumers**

